



MADISON AREA ATARI USERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 56191, MADISON, WI 53705

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6 June 1987

a word or two
from the chair



paul schnettler

What a crazy month this has been! Up and down like a rollercoaster. A lot of strange personal experiences have really kept me from doing anything at all with my computer lately. At any rate, let's hope that June is a bit

more sedate. Speaking of crazy, how do you all like the weather we have been having?

Hot and sticky with plenty of lightning...Just the time to start wondering if the old bulletin board is going to stay in operation. I thought I would start my hardware section with the Avatex modem mod. But it now looks as if I should

of done my first article with the battery backup project. Well, look at it this way, we're probably better starting off with something easy. If you have

any problems with the mod give me a call or bounce your troubles off me at the next MAAUG meeting. Remember, it's at the church! I hope to see you all there to hear the ST midi demo.

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notice!!

the next MAAUG meeting will be held on June 9, at lake edge UCC, 4200 Buckeye Rd. Map inside!

contribute to YOUR newsletter-its what YOU make it!

Bargain Rack reviews by Brad E. Utschig

This month I will present to you two more items from Electronic Arts' Certified GOLD software collection, ARCHON and ARCHON II: ADEPT. Both of these items can be purchased from Software Discounters of America for \$9.88 each. This is truly a bargain. ARCHON Simply put, ARCHON is a strategy board (similar to a checker board) game in which you attempt to

control all of the power points on the board. ARCHON adds a new dimension to conventional board game play. If you desire a position on the board which is occupied by one of your opponent's icons, you must enter combat and earn that square. Game play is against the computer or a fellow human. You also have your choice of representing the "Light Side" or the "Dark

Side". Game play is depicted on two screens. One is a strategy screen, which is similar to traditional board games. The other is the combat screen (mentioned above) in which you battle for your desired square. In order to first learn the game, it would be wise to play against a friend or a fictional player until you become more familiar with the game. The strategy part of the game is easy to learn, but the combat portion is somewhat awkward (i.e. you cannot utilize your rapid trigger finger, you must wait to reload) and you will not survive for very long. Characters are similar to those found in the popular Dungeons and Dragons games. Representing the Light Side you have at your disposal: a wizard, valkyrie, unicorn, djinni, archer, phoenix, golem, and a knight. The Dark Side is represented by a sorceress, shapeshifter, basilisk, dragon, mantichore, banshee, troll, and a goblin. The eighteen icons on each side are in varying numbers depending upon that icon's strength. ARCHON adds an interesting "twist" to the game by implementing a "Luminosity Cycle". Certain squares vary in brightness, from light to dark and dark to light throughout the game. When in combat on one of these squares, your luck tends to increase and decrease with this luminosity cycle. This means that an icon of the Light Side is harder to defeat on a light square than on a dark square and likewise for an icon of the Dark Side fighting on a dark square. In ARCHON, icons have varying properties. Some are

Avatax 1200 modification

#1 purpose: Add High-speed carrier detect to become 100% Hayes compatible. rewritten by Paul Schnettler

NOTICE:

Disclaimer-MAAUG takes no responsibility for any damage caused by this modification if done correctly, this mod WILL work!!

PARTS NEEDED: 1- MC1488 chip Radio Shack #276-2520(rs-232 driver) 2 ft. of #20 to 24 gauge hook-up wire.

GETTING STARTED: After opening up the modem... locate ic # U30 (located by the rs-232 connector). Take the new ic and fold up all pins EXCEPT--#1,7, and 14. Now piggy-back the new ic on to ic#U30. Using a low wattage soldering iron, solder pins #1,7 and 14 of the new ic to pins #1,7 and 14 of ic #U30. Now take a wire from pin #2 of the new ic to pin #12 of ic #U23 (located just behind led's). Now take a wire from pin #3 of the new ic to pin #12 of the rs-232 connector. Now take a wire to pins #4,5,9,10, and 12 and solder all these pins together. (we're making a heat sink to keep the new chip from

overheating). After you have soldered all these pins together, solder a wire from board ground (of the modem) to these pins. That's it!! To test what you have just completed take a piece of wire and ground the cathode end (banded side) of the HS led, if all was done correctly, the HS led should light, and with a VOM connected to pin #12 on the rs-232 connector, you should read about +8 volts or so. If your not sure how to do this you can mail me your modem and a \$25 dollar money order to: Chairman M.A.A.U.G. P.O Box 56191 Madison, WI. 53705 US MAIL ONLY!! The above article was reprinted from the H.A.C.E. March newsletter some modifications were made where necessary.

slow, some are fast, some travel on the ground, others can fly. A particular icon may have some weak traits, but these are made up for by other traits. For example, a golem is slow but his attack force is great. Learning the different abilities of the differing icons adds a definite challenge to the game that I enjoy. You have to know your icons as well as your opponents and use this knowledge to best advantage. Other similar traits to D&D is that your icons have lifelines, displaying the health/strength of a battling icon. Healing can take place by a magic spell (described later) or by the simple passage of time. The lifeline is either decreased by the severity of the wound or diminished by death. Each side is controlled by a mage having the same spells as its opponent. The spells are as follows: teleport, to move any icon any distance from one square to another; heal, to instantly heal any icon of all wounds; shift time, causing a reverse in the luminosity cycle; exchange, to cause any two icons to trade places; revive, to restore any "killed" icon; imprison, to temporarily imprison any icon; and (my favorite) summon elemental, to create a new, temporary icon which represents one of the four ancient elements of air, earth, fire, and water. This elemental creature vanishes after its combat but it is worth it to see it hack into your opponent's toughest piece. There is one catch (as always with good things), each spell can be used only once and the use of each spell weakens the mage, so use them sparingly. ARCHON has fairly good graphics and the

speed in combat is quick (if you are patient enough to reload). It has the elements of a thinking game as well as a good "destruct-O" game. The manual is written clearly with good sections for questions & answers, playing hints & tips on strategy. I enjoy this game, especially when playing friends that are good at it. It would make a great addition to any collection. ARCHON II: ADEPT Sequels, sequels everywhere there are sequels. As is usually the case, most sequels are not appear to be as good as the original. Unfortunately, this appears to be the case with ADEPT. It is a good game, but the originality of the game is lost (hence ARCHON was the original) with its introduction and the strategy is rather difficult. Please do not be discouraged, the great price definitely warrants its loss of originality and makes it a good buy. The object of ADEPT is to occupy all six power points simultaneously, by triumph in the "Apocalypse" (brought on by casting a special spell), or by your opponent exhausting his magical energy or icons. ADEPT utilizes the two screen design of game play a strategy screen and a combat screen. Unlike ARCHON, ADEPT has a strategy screen which is nothing like the "ARCHON" checker board. It is made up of distorted rectangles placed within rectangles and six oddly placed power points. The "concentric" rectangles making up the main board represent the classic elements of air, earth, fire, and water. In addition to this there are four squares, two of these are black representing the Void. The other two squares signify the citadels of the opposing

forces, Order and Chaos. The battleground still remains as the arena for a fast-action fight. After playing ARCHON, ADEPT takes some time for getting accustomed to its board and different game play. The game begins with four Adepts on each side. Movement of an icon then consists of one of three types. Moving an Adept, using an Adept to cast a spell, or moving a conjured up icon. Yes, in ADEPT you can create and KEEP your newly formed ally on the game board (much unlike ARCHON). Lying at the heart of the action of ADEPT is magic. Instead of a move, an Adept is able to cast any spell for which it has adequate energy. Again, each spell costs energy and maintaining each and every Demon and Elemental on your side costs energy as well. In addition to magic being an important element of the game, energy is even more important. The only time that you will gain energy is when one or more your icons is occupying a power point, so utilize it wisely. You are given a wide range of magic spells that will suit your every taste. All Adepts are immune to all spells except "heal" and each spell is limited to the element that the conjuring Adept is on. Your spells are as follows: heal, to effectively cure half of an icon's wounds; weaken, to decrease an opposing icon's lifespan in half; imprison, to immobilize an icon; release, to free an imprisoned icon; banish (very costly), to rid yourself of a troublesome icon; apocalypse, to start a battle to end all battles (usually a suicidal move); and summon (the most common), choose among 4 Elementals or 4 Demons to occupy a specific element. Again, ADEPT is mostly

magic, using the above described spells to accomplish your triumph. ADEPT has good graphics comparable to that of ARCHON's. I am not very good at it, as the strategy is difficult (this is why I prefer ARCHON). The manual is brief and leaves much to experimentation. The combat tips are helpful but they are mainly an explanation of ADEPT's style of play. However, if you like a challenge and like evoking spells, then buy ADEPT and enjoy! Next month I will have two more items from Electronic Arts (yes, again). Your comments, suggestions, or questions are more than welcome. Please leave a message on MAAUG's BBS: (608) 244-5642. -Brad

ST Disk of the Month

This month's disk of the month will have a lot of new things, including a new price, \$4.00 per disk. The disk itself will AT LEAST have several games, including a FANTASTIC demo of a soon-to-be release arcade quality game called AZARIAN. Also included is a medium Resolution Missile Command game, a GFA-Basic version of the popular card game MILLES BOURNE, an ST Plotter for making graphs and such and many others. Hopefully, there will be a demonstration of the disk at the next meeting.

See you there!

Editors Desktop

by John Thompson

Welcome to the June newsletter! The first thing you noticed when you pried off that staple and opened it up was the picture right?? If not, you shouldn't let your eyes wander like that!

Seriously though, what do you think? I want your opinion, on the pictures, the articles, the graphics (or lack thereof), the style, the layout, anything.

Now about the pictures, I didn't like the drawing of our loyal chairman anymore than he did, so when I volunteered to take over the editors duties, I put on the old thinking cap searching for ideas on how to improve the quality graphics, short of hiring a artist.

After discussing it at where I work, I tried it with what's called white dot screen, which is a sheet of sticky, removable plastic with white dots printed on it. The screen comes in different "sizes", which are Lines Per Inch (from 42 to 85 LPI) and density, the size of the dots.

You just cut the screen to size, stick it on the photo (it should be very clear photo, like a black and white), and get it

on there TIGHT! and watch out for air bubbles. you will probably have to press the "light" button down a couple of notches on the photocopier you use. experiment.

I know this doesn't have much to do with the club, but I'm sure some of the users groups we exchange letters with would like to know how it's done. thanks for suffering me so far!

As far as I know, I'm the only ST owner in our group who after buying a ST, went and bought a 8bit tool

actually, I started out with a 400 back in about 1982, got a 800xl about '84 or so, then got my ST in december 1985, then sold all the 8bit equipment, except the 1010 record (couldn't find the thing)

Now, last week, I recieved my new 800XL, 1050, P:R: Connection, and BASIC XL.

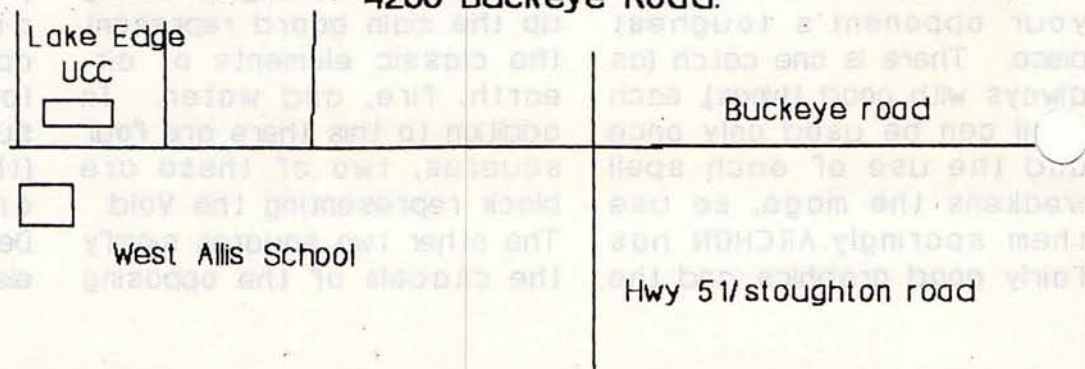
now I'm wishing I didn't sell all those disks!!

How many of you would be interested in placing classified ads in the newsletter?

the ads could be either looking to buy or sell Atari equipment.

Lemme know what you Think!

Map to Lake Edge United Church of Christ 4200 Buckeye Road.



orry I couldn't do better!

The Rumor Mill

By P.C. Newman



Paul Newman

I love to keep up on the latest rumors and "news" in the world of Atari, so I thought I'd write an article from time-to-time for the newsletter on what I can find out. It won't appear every month (some months are REAL slow on this kind of news), but I'll try to write as often as I can find something.

It seems like MOST of the news is about the ST these days, but I'll try to keep digging up some word on the 8-bit scene as well. With all of that said, on to the "news".....

From GENie we've heard that there is a special connector being made which will allow the ST's to be hooked up to a multi-synch monitor.

This means that we may soon have the capability of running low, medium, and high resolution from ONE monitor. I'm not sure how they plan to handle the

fact that the ST's operating system is designed to AUTOMATICALLY sense the resolution of the monitor that's plugged in. Maybe it will always boot up in High Res....

Atari is NOW saying that the

long-awaited laser printer will not be available till July. No more word on the blitter chip, the Mega ST's or the Atari PC.

Some of the folks on GENie are beginning to get a little ticked off at "Promises Without the Product", but I guess that's the way it goes in the computer game. Look at IBM - they've announced a new operating system that probably won't be out for TWO YEARS!

It sounds like there's several MS-DOS emulators in the works for the ST. One that is REAL, though, is called PC-DITTO from Avant-Garde Systems in Jacksonville, Florida.

It is slated to be shown at the Comdex show in Atlanta at the beginning of June and it already has a "certified list" of over 320 IBM programs that will run on the ST using PC-DITTO. Being an IBM person at work, I notice that ALL of the packages that we run are on the list, including Supercalc 4, dBase III plus and Volkswriter 3. I'm sure that most of your favorites are on the list, too. It includes most popular IBM spreadsheets, word processors and databases, as well as a long list of IBM games and even term programs like ProComm. It also emulates IBM monochrome and CGA graphics.

This software emulator is NO LONGER in the vaporware stage - it was seen at the Corp Con show in New York in March. Since then, the authors have added hard drive capability so that you

can partition a portion of your Atari hard drive as an IBM hard drive. You're not going to have to wait long for this release, either. The disk copies have been duplicated and the manual is in printing. This may be the answer to most people's needs to have IBM-emulation without buying a second computer.....

Oh, yes, it runs ALL programs at NO LESS than 80-85% of the speed of a standard 4.77 MHz IBM machine. If you want more speed than this, you'll probably have to wait around for a hardware emulator. Retail price is 89.95.

The other nice thing is that Avant-Garde is apparently sending out a letter to all user's groups offering a one-time group purchase discount. Any MAAUG members who may be interested in such a purchase may want to get in touch with me at the next meeting.....

(Editors Note: many of the mentioned Atari items, including the mega ST were promised a release of "end of july", supposedly, this includes the 80column card for 8bit machines and the 1200 baud modem, if they arent already out. The blitter chip has been pushed back to "september")

1987 Consumer electronics Show Bits and Pieces

A late breaking report bringing you the "news" from the Atari front

by John Thompson

Atari Corporation will include three popular cartridge games at no additional cost when it begins shipping the new XE video game system in July.

Games bundled with the XE game system are the top-selling hit Flight Simulator II, from SubLogic; the Atari classic Missile Command; and Blast'Em, a shooting game being specially developed for the XE. The new game system was being demonstrated in Atari's booth at the Summer Electronics Show.

"The XE is the ultimate game system for the serious game player," said Michael Katz, executive Vice President for marketing and entertainment electronics. "It has more features and power than any other game system, and we're including \$80 worth of free games with every system. No other game maker is offering anything close to it".

The XE game system features a console with 64K of memory, an attachable game-playing keyboard, video gun, and a joystick.

Its memory, equivalent to an 8-bit computer, is the largest in any game system. That gives it superior graphics, dramatic animation and realistic sound, and the power to run advanced computer games.

The cartridge for the XE game system can store over 256K of program, which is twice as great as any comparable system. Atari is also selling a disk drive for players who prefer disk-based software.

The attachable keyboard

and video gun make it easy to play hundreds of sophisticated games such as Flight Simulator II, which requires keyboard interaction. The target gun is attached to the console to electronically "shoot" at images on a TV or monitor.

The XE can play more games than any comparable system, and the library grows steadily as Atari converts disk games to cartridges, Katz said. The XE game system can play games written for the Atari XE and XL computer systems.

The XE, which complements Atari's popular 2600 and 7800 video game systems, carries a suggested retail price of around \$150.

"Atari intends to remain the leader in video game systems and to increase its share of the U.S. personal computer market," said Jerry Brown, Atari Vice President and general manager for U.S. operations.

To do that, Atari has quadrupled the advertising and promotion budget for its personal computer and video game product lines. As part of its new multi-million dollar marketing program the company has developed seven new commercials, introduced new in-store display units, and designed new packaging for its video game systems.

Atari has developed three new commercials for its video game systems--two for the new XE video game system and one for the 7800 video game system.

The new commercials as well as an existing commercial for the 2600 game system are scheduled to run on network television, spot television and

nationally syndicated shows from September through December.

In addition, Atari will produce commercials to run on top-40 radio stations around the country in the same time period. During the same period, print advertisements for the XE and 7800 game systems will also run in comic books.

In its first television campaign for the popular ST line of personal computers, the company developed four commercials that are scheduled to run on the same types of television as the game systems, also for the 3rd and 4th quarters.

The new Atari PC compatible was on display, with a color monitor, which was SHARPI. The PC will be sold with mouse and GEM, and a choice between the 499 model (computer and disk drive) or the 699 model (EGA, color monitor (I think), computer, disk drive).

The redesigned 2600 was there too, it was DIFFERENT! Its only about the size of a couple of modems stacked one on another. real small.

I was also disappointed that they did not have the new Mega STs, laser printer, or 1200 baud modem on display, even though I was told on GENIE service by Neil Harris that they probably would not be displayed. That's really too bad--I might have gotten part of this newsletter printed by the laser if they did!!

Several people from our LUGS group were also at CES, but we really haven't got the space to print all the names--let's just say we should go to Atarifest!!

Where Did All The Time Go?



Craig Radi

This is a question that I keep asking myself all the time, and I can never come up with a good answer for it. When I first bought my current setup, I had visions of me hacking till hours of the morning with a pot of coffee brewing on the stove at all times. So I went out and bought several books on programming in various languages, and purchased numerous disks and cartridges representing those languages. I thought I was all set for the ultimate journey into my Atari computer, I was wrong. It was when I first opened up those books that I discovered this was no overnight deal here, and I was going to have to STUDY! Yuch! There in front of me was a wealth of knowledge and all I had to do is find the time to read and absorb it all. I first would read the books and go back a few times to let it all soak in, then try to sit down in front of keyboard and try to make all of the magic work for me.

It would never fail that I would always get stuck at a certain point, and never be able to take it any further. This grows to be very annoying and a waste of time if you never complete the task at hand. I thought to myself, "Could this be just happening to me, or do all new users run into this?" The answer was simple, don't let it get you down if you fall short of your computer goals from time to time. Pace yourself, and try to enjoy what you are doing, that's why you bought it for in the first place. I have also found that trying to learn too much at one time gets you very confused and you retain very little of what you did read or do. I am still a beginner, and have a lot to learn about my machine, and hopefully will find the time to apply it someday. Till then I will plug away at my unfinished programs and try to make them come together. Some people have talked about a new user SIG. I think that this kind of a forum could help all of us new hackers get our feet wet with our computers, and help answer all those questions that I know that I wish I could have had answered. I hope this article reflects the thoughts of what I felt most of the new users go through when they first get started in computing. Like I said, if you can find the time to work on programing, take your time and be patient. Happy Computing!

More CES observations!

the theme of the Summer CES for Atari seemed to be flying high, as was demonstrated by the cessna perched atop the Atari booth, the Flight Simulator cabin facing a projection TV screen, with Flight Simulator II running!

Atari was also handing out nifty little "wings" for attendees, which had the Fuji symbol in the center, and the words "Atari" and "Flying High". I'll have about 10 of these up for grabs at the June meeting-first come, first served! also seen at the booth was the 80column card for the 8bit machines, although it wasn't mentioned in the press releases, probably because it was "old news".

Atari had many of the "new" game machines available for demonstration-nice touch, if it weren't for the shortage of joysticks (did they get ripped off?)

many software publishers were also there, including michtron, micropose, epyx, SSI, hybrid arts (demoing the CES favorite, kill a happy face, which is a game where up to 16 STs can be hooked up through the MIDI port and have a player using one machine), and many others (I wanna get balance of power for the ST!)

it was really nice meeting some of the people I've met before only on the networks-people like Darlah Hudson and Bob retelle, who are Atari Roundtable sysops on GENIE.

Gordon Monier of Michtron, Neil harris of Atari, and a sighting of Carry tramiel of Atari.

Radmoose of GENIE, and his hat with antlers and a moose nose, (gave me his "business card too! "Radmoose") fun!!

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

This newsletter is produced by members of the Madison Area Atari Users Group, An Association of individuals with a common interest in using and programming Atari computers and other equipment. The Madison Area Atari Users Group is not affiliated with Atari Corporation or any other commercial organization.

All articles are written and donated by the membership. Occasionally, an article will be reprinted from another user group with appropriate credit to that user group. We extend the same courtesy to those groups who would like to reproduce portions of this newsletter. All articles reflect the opinions of the the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Madison Area Atari Users Group.

Your contribution of articles is actively encouraged. You may submit your articles by uploading them to the MAAUG BBS at 244-5642 or you may submit them on hardcopy printout. Picture files may also be uploaded for incorporation with the text. the deadline for all submissions is the 25th day of each month for inclusion in the next issue. For more information, write to Madison Area Atari Users Group Newsletter, P.O. Box 56191, Madison, WI 52705.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership is open to individuals and families who are interested in using and programming Atari computers. Your membership includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to the groups Public Domain Cassette, diskette, and publication libraries, as well as club level access to files on the MAAUG BBS. In addition to attending group functions and checking out materials, members are entitled to vote in club elections and to hold elected positions in the organization.

MEETING INFORMATION

MAAUG meetings are held once each month on the second Tuesday of the month. Meetings are generally held in the IMC of West High School, Madison, WI. The meeting room doors open at 7:00 pm and the meetings start promptly at 7:30 pm.

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